

CHAPTER 9 NEWS MEDIA RELEASE

Article 1

MEDIA ACCESS

Section 9-1.1. When media access permitted; student discipline issues; Personnel Issues.—A. Suffolk Public Schools may allow access to students and staff during school hours or school events if it will not, in the opinion of the superintendent or the principal, disrupt instruction or jeopardize the safety of students or staff.

B. In student discipline issues, the spokesperson for Suffolk Public Schools will only say that the incident is/was under investigation and that disciplinary action will be/was taken pursuant to policy. School staff cannot verify student names involved, but can disclose the student's age, grade, and school.

C. In personnel issues, the spokesperson for Suffolk Public Schools will provide details to the media as allowed by law. (Issued August 21, 1997)

Legal Authority - School Board Policy §10-3.1.

Article 2

CRISIS SITUATIONS

Section 9-2.1. Restrictions on media access; establishment of press center; student interviews.—A. In the event of a crisis on school property, the media may be allowed on school property only to use the school as a background for camera shots.

B. However, in some cases, the school principal and central office administrators may decide to establish a press center within the school building, as outlined in the division's Crisis Communications Plan.

C. In a crisis, reporters and photographers/videographers may be denied access to interview students or staff on school property. If student interviews are arranged in relation to a crisis situation or a controversial issue, it is the school administration's responsibility to secure prior verbal permission from the student's parent/guardian. The Suffolk Public Schools Parent Permission form will not be adequate. (Issued August 21, 1997)

Legal Authority - School Board Policy §10-3.1.

Article 3

NON-CRISIS

Section 9-3.1. Parental Permission required; Administrator Presence permitted— A. In a non-crisis situation when the media requests student interviews, photographs, video, or student writings, the school requires the media to give as much advance notice as possible. A signed parental permission form or a phone call securing parental permission is also necessary.

B. During student and staff contact with the media, administrators have the right to sit in on the interview and accompany the photographer/videographer through the school. (Issued August 21, 1997)

Legal Authority - School Board Policy §10-3.1.

Article 4

INTERNET REGULATIONS

Section 9-4.1. Scope; definitions; requirements generally; content requirements; user responsibilities. —A. This regulation applies to all departments, offices, and schools of Suffolk Public Schools and to all employees when representing Suffolk Public Schools, regardless of the computer system used.

B. For the purpose of this regulation, Suffolk Public Schools has used the following definitions or terms:

(1) “Curator” is a person assigned by a principal or program manager to maintain a set of school or department web pages on the Suffolk Public Schools web server regardless of the computer system used.

(2) “Web site” is a collection of Internet pages that are interconnected by links.

(3) “Home page” refers to the first page in any collection of web pages. It is usually named “index.htm.”

(4) “System wide information” includes any information (data, statistics, publications, etc.) that represents the entire school division to the general public.

(5) “Browser” is software that is used to access files available over the Internet. The most commonly used browsers are Netscape and Internet Explorer.

C. The following requirements are applicable to the posting of information on Suffolk Public Schools’ Internet:

(1) Web pages on Suffolk Public Schools web servers must have an informational purpose that is related to a Suffolk Public School assignment, project, job, or function and must carry information that is appropriate for a worldwide audience.

(2) Web sites for any schools, offices, centers, and departments of Suffolk Public Schools must reside on servers located within the computer network supported by the Department of Technology (DIT). Any exceptions must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.

(3) Web sites for any schools, offices, and departments of Suffolk Public Schools must use domain names that are approved by Coordinator of Technology. All exceptions be approved by Superintendent or designee.

(4) All system wide information published on the Internet will be linked to the Suffolk Public Schools homepage and other navigational web pages as deemed appropriate by the Coordinator of Technology.

(5) An employee or a student shall not establish a web server on any equipment within a school or office if that web server will be accessible beyond an office, classroom, or laboratory without prior approval of Coordinator of Technology.

(6) Copyrighted material shall not be placed on any part of a web page without full compliance with the terms of the copyright.

(7) Visitors cannot be required to provide user identification and passwords to access public information on the Suffolk Public Schools web site.

(8) Student home addresses, phone numbers, and/or e-mail addresses shall not be posted on any Suffolk Public Schools web page, and student names shall not be published if the students' parent or guardian has withheld consent.

(9) Information may not be posted on the Internet if it: (a) violates the privacy of others, or (b) jeopardizes the health and safety of students, or (c) is obscene or libelous, or (d) causes disruption of school activities, or (e) plagiarizes the work of others, or (f) is not approved by the principal or program manager.

(10) Pictures of students on web pages shall not be used if the students' parent or guardian has withheld consent by completing the Objection to Use of Photos form. If student pictures are used, only the students' first name may accompany the picture(s).

D. The following content requirements are applicable to all schools:

(1) The home page for each school as well as all subsequent pages must contain the date the page was last updated, and this must be followed on all web pages unless the content dictates an exception.

(2) The home page for each school as well as all subsequent pages must include the name of the page curator and the curator's e-mail address with a "mail to" link, and this must be followed on all web pages unless the content dictates an exception.

(3) The home page for each school must include a link to Suffolk Public Schools' home page and to Suffolk Public Schools' web site and subsequent pages should also include a link to the school home page.

(4) School web sites must, at a minimum, provide the following information: (a) school name, address, and main phone number; (b) the name of the principal and other key staff members along with phone numbers and e-mail

addresses; (c) photograph of the principal; (d) bell schedule; (e) school supply lists; (f) link to Suffolk Public Schools' lunch menus; (g) link to Suffolk Public Schools' emergency announcements page; (h) link to school year calendar; (i) link to school profile compiled and posted by the Department of Educational Accountability; and (j) link to map showing the location of the school.

E. Content requirements for departments and offices shall include the following:

(1) The home page for each Suffolk Public School department and office must have a white background and subsequent pages must also have a white background, unless the content dictates the need for an exception:

(2) The top of each Suffolk Public School department and office home page, as well as subsequent pages, must carry a graphic that is compatible with Suffolk Public Schools' home page graphics and indicates the department name or office name and/or topic.

(3) The bottom of each department and office web page must contain the date the page was last updated and the name of the page curator with a link to his or her e-mail address.

(4) The bottom of each department and office home page must carry a link to the Suffolk Public Schools' home page and/or department or office home page and to Suffolk Public Schools search site.

(5) Links to external web sites (sites not on the Suffolk Public Schools server) from Suffolk Public Schools web pages must be limited to those that have an educational purpose and meet the standards for instructional materials used by the school system. A school system web page may link to a commercial web site or a page that contains advertising only with the permission of the Coordinator of Technology. The following disclaimer statement must appear on any web page that includes external links: "This web page contains links to one or more pages that are outside the Suffolk Public Schools network. Suffolk Public Schools does not control the content or relevancy of these pages."

(6) Web pages must be designed with consideration of the needs of individuals with disabilities, such as those with visual or auditory impairments.

(7) Web pages must be designed to be compatible with all major browsers and should avoid the use of nonstandard tags.

(8) A copyright designation is not appropriate on any Suffolk Public Schools web pages unless a copyright has been specifically registered for the material presented.

(9) Individual e-mail addresses must be provided on web pages so that visitors can ask questions and get additional information. Generic e-mail addresses may be appropriate in some situations but must be approved by the Coordinator of Technology, prior to being established.

F. The following responsibilities apply to all users of the Internet for Suffolk Public Schools:

(1) All users must act in accordance with all policies, rules, and

regulations governing use of the Internet.

(2) The Public Information Officer is responsible for establishing the accuracy and appropriateness of official Suffolk Public School information posted on Suffolk Public Schools' home page and for developing and maintaining the framework of the public interface of the Suffolk Public Schools' web site.

(3) The Coordinator of Technology is responsible for approving all generic (non individual) e-mail accounts, except those to be used for training room computers and for internal school computer lab accounts.

(4) The Coordinator of Technology shall provide and administer Suffolk Public Schools' Internet Services, Internet Protocol, (IP) addresses, and connectivity between Suffolk Public Schools' network infrastructure and the Internet service provider and shall manage Suffolk Public Schools' central web servers.

(5) Principals and program managers are responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of materials posted on school and department web pages and for ensuring that the material is consistent with the official information posted by the Division's Public Information Officer.

(6) Volunteers and students may help create and maintain web pages, but only the curator may upload or download files to the Suffolk Public Schools' server.

(7) Curators are responsible for regularly updating the web pages for their schools, departments, or offices and for removing outdated information and files.

(8) Curators must check all links from their web pages to sites not on the Suffolk Public Schools' server at least twice annually to ensure that the links are accurate and that the information presented has not changed and continues to conform to Suffolk Public Schools' standards for instructional materials. (March 10, 2005)

Legal Authority – School Board Policy §5-6.3.